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AN HISTORICAL ORATION

— ON —

THE LIFE AND LABORS

— OF —

Rev. Hezekiah G. Leigh, D. D.,

DELIVERED IN KINSTON, N. C.,

— BY —

REV. W. H. MOORE, D. D.,

— OF —

The North Carolina Conference,

DECEMBER 8, 1896.



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Mr. President, and Members of the Historical Society of the North Carolina Conference :

To honor the living who deserve our esteem on account of their virtues, is both a duty and a pleasure. We are not slow to recognize the worth of those who have put us under obligations to them, by enriching us in material things, whether their services have been rendered to us as individuals, or as the benefactors of mankind. But, to hold in grateful and loving remembrance the names and virtues of our sainted dead, and to keep these fresh in the minds of the living, making of them an inspiration to a nobler life for ourselves, and coming generations, is a duty we owe both to the dead and the living.

It has been said that the refinement of a people can be judged of by the care they take of the graves of their dead ; and, it may be more truthfully said, that a peoples appreciation of a noble life is manifested by the sacredness with which the memory of that life is cherished.

Nations build monuments of brass, and stone, to perpetuate the memory of those who have rendered signal service to their country, and the Church should not be less slow to embalm in grateful remembrance the memory of those who have wrought well in her interest. It is piety, not patriotism, which says, "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

I could have wished, at the time your partiality devolved on me the task I am now attempting to perform, that it had fallen to the lot of one more competent to worthily fulfill your wish ; for surely, a life so consecrated, and useful, should have a rarely gifted tongue to perpetuate its memory. But, however far I may fall short of a worthy performance of my task, I shall be conscious that I have brought to its accomplishment a heart loyal to the purpose of the Society, and as earnest a desire as any can cherish that the picture of our distinguished brother's life should have a frame as noble as itself in which to hang it on the walls of our memory.

Liks some tall peak which lifts itself far above the mountain range and which seems to grow taller by recession from it, so does the life of this eminent servant of God and the Church in the lengthning distance of time grow larger and more impressive to those who contemplate it.

In reviewing the life and labors of him who is the subject of this address, his Family History will naturally claim our attention first.

His Family History.

Hezekiah Gilbert Leigh was born in Durand's Neck, Perquimans County, North Carolina, November 23rd, 1795, and was of Scotch-Irish descent. His early ancestors came to "the James River section" of Virginia, and settled there soon after the establishment of "the Jamestown Colony." Gilbert Leigh, the grandfather of Hezekiah, moved from the James River section to Durand's Neck, in the year 1760. He bought lands near the New Hope M. E. Church, and built a residence there, which is still standing, and occupied as a dwelling. It was in this house that Hezekiah was born. Richard Leigh, son of Gilbert Leigh, and Elizabeth, his wife, was born October 14th, 1773. Richard was married to Charlotte Spruill, December 18th, 1794, and their son, Hezekiah Gilbert, was born November 23rd, 1795.

Of Hezekiah's childhood I have not been able to gather anything of public interest. Imagination must fill a gap of fifteen years; but we may well believe him to have been a bright and healthy lad, with more than ordinary ambition for mental culture. Socially, his family ranked among the best, and, having both lands and slaves, his parents were able to give their son the best educational advantages offered by the schools of that time.

The old Colonial town of Edenton, though not so populous then, as now, was, nevertheless, a place of great importance. It was the rival of any town in the State for commerce, culture, and social life. There was an Academy here, and, as this school afforded better facilities than could be obtained nearer home, Hezekiah was entered at this Academy in 1810, at which time he had attained the age of 15 years. He remained in this school two years, and, on leaving it, returned to his home in Durand's Neck, where he taught till he was about 22 years old.

What purpose in life he may have cherished, what avocation, or profession he intended to follow, is unknown. Though his education was only academical, it was equal to that of any of the young men of his section, and placed him far in advance of the multitude. An honorable career might have been his at the Bar, in Medicine, or in the halls of Legislation. For the first, and the last named, he was pre-eminently endorsed. But, whatever may have been his purpose, this year was remarkable as the one in which occurred the event which proved to be the turning point in his whole subsequent life. God had a great work for him to

do, and this was the year of his conversion. He who took David from the sheep-cote, and anointed him to be the King of Israel, took this young man out of the school-room and anointed him with divine power, as a preacher of the gospel of His Son.

Tradition says, "he was converted in an old-fashioned Methodist Camp-Meeting, held at Nags Head Chapel," one of the appointments of the present Perquimans circuit. The meeting in which he was converted was conducted by the Rev. Henry Holmes and others. Doubtless there were others converted at this meeting, but had young Leigh been the solitary convert, as is said to have been the case in Georgia, where young James Osgood Andrews was the only convert, the meeting would have been a great success. The conversion of one such soul is worth a life-time effort. Who but God can tell what shall be the result, in all its bearings, on the Church and State, or that of individual souls?

At the time of his conversion, much the larger part of the territory now embraced in the North Carolina Conference, was in the bounds of the Virginia. Believing himself to be called of God to preach the gospel, he "conferred not with flesh and blood," but devoted himself at once to the work, offered himself to the Virginia Conference, in the bounds of which he was living, and to which, under God, he was indebted for his conversion.

His application was favorably acted upon, and he was "received on trial," by the Conference at its session in February, 1818. He remained an honored, as he was a distinguished member of that body, till the creation of the North Carolina Conference in 1836, at which time he became a member of this Conference, which membership he retained till his death, September 18th, 1853.

On January the 5th, 1830, he was married to Miss Mary Jane Crump, a daughter of Major Richard Crump, of Northampton county, in this State; and soon after his marriage bought a plantation, and settled his family near Boydton, Mecklenburg county, Virginia, which was the seat of Randolph-Macon College, of which Institution he was Founder.

There were born to him six children. The oldest child, Lieut. Col. R. W. Leigh, of the 43rd Mississippi Regiment, was killed in the battle of Corinth, October 22nd, 1862.

H. G. Leigh, M. D., now resides, as he has long done, in Petersburg, Va., and is an honored member of that community, and distinguished in his profession.

J. E. Leigh, whose surpassing eloquence crowned him as "the silver tongued orator of Mississippi," died November 7th, 1891.

Louisa C. Leigh, married Judge John B. Sale, of Mississippi, and died in the summer of 1864.

Mary Alice Leigh, married Capt. James E. Craddock, and is now a widow, living in Columbus, Mississippi.

F. M. Leigh, the youngest child, lives in Columbus, Mississippi, and is now a man of 52 years, having been born in February, 1844.

Mary Jane Leigh, widow of the Rev. H. G. Leigh, D. D., died in Columbus, Mississippi, April 14th, 1881, and is buried in the city where she died. The mortal remains of her husband rest in the old Randolph-Macon cemetery, Mecklenburg county, Virginia. Widely separated is their sleeping dust, but they rest well after life's toilsome day, and he who watched over them so tenderly while living, shall one day call them thence, and glorified together, they shall be forever "present with the Lord."

His Labors.

Having given this much of Dr. Leigh's Family History, I may be permitted now to speak of his labors, and the eminent success with which they were crowned.

As we have already seen, he was "received on trial" by the Virginia Conference at its session in February, 1818. His splendid physique, his mental, and spiritual endowments brought him into prominence at once, and so well did he meet the responsibilities of his position, in all places where he became known, he was held up by the Laity as a model for his successors.

There were giants in those days, and Hezekiah G. Leigh stood at the head, the peer of any, and the most influential of them all.

A list of the appointments he filled in both the Virginia, and North Carolina Conferences will abundantly confirm this statement. His appointments were: Bedford, Raleigh, Gloucester, Norfolk, Petersburg, Meherrin District, James River District, Agt. for Randolph-Macon College, Petersburg District, Raleigh District, Henderson Circuit; and, finally, he was for a second time Presiding Elder of the Raleigh District, and Agt. for Randolph-Macon College.

For eighteen years he was a member of the Virginia, and seventeen a member of the North Carolina Conference; nearly six years of which latter period he was without an appointment, on account of bodily affliction, which incapacitated him for active work.

With the mental endowments he possessed, and the academic training he had received, added to by an extensive course of reading, which made him familiar with the English classics, and gave him a readiness of speech in conversation, and an elegant diction

in public discourse, it is not to be wondered at that his broad mind should be pained at, and keenly sympathize with the masses who were not only living in ignorance, but were indifferent to their surroundings. Still less is it to be wondered at that he should be pained to see a young man entering the ministry of the Church, with every qualification for success save that of mental culture, and doomed by its lack to an almost barren ministry.

An "experience of grace"—a sound conversion—to "know God in the pardon of sins," has always been regarded by the church as the first necessity for a preacher. In the earlier days of her history a man who had none of the subtle forms of sin to fight, but only its grosser ones, could, by "telling his experience" out of a warm heart, win those who were out of Christ. But the times were changing, had changed, in so many places, that if Methodism held her own as a spiritual force in the world, particularly in the towns, and more thickly settled rural sections, the education of the ministry, far beyond what it then was, had become a necessity.

Dr. Leigh was one of the first men in the church to see this necessity, and, with him to see a thing, was to act. His action was along two lines, both of which looked to the accomplishment of the same result. He first secured the raising of the standard for admission into the Conference, and then a wider compulsory course of study for the four years preceding ordination to the full duties of the gospel ministry.

This was of incalculable benefit to the churches, and to the men themselves. It sharpened many a battle-axe, and tempered many a trenchant blade, which otherwise would have remained as dull as a hoe, and as untempered as mortar into which no lime has been put.

But, to get the best results he knew that more thoroughness was essential than this "Conference Course" would give. He saw that an institution of college grade was necessary, in which at least a good proportion of young men called of God to preach might receive a more liberal education. Some young men who believed themselves called to preach, hesitated from lack of preparation. With Dr. Leigh a call to preach, meant a call to get ready to preach, for those not already prepared; and he earnestly desired to put a liberal education in reach of all who could, and would take it. And, besides this, Dr. Leigh saw the disastrous effects of educating our young people in colleges of other denominations, or, worse than that, of educating them in colleges where religion is ignored. His motto was: "Religion and learning must

go together." But, state institutions did not offer such, and those of other denominations did it with a bias that tendered to alienate our young men from the church of their fathers. His watchful eye detected these influences at work against the progress of the church in the more intelligent communities, and he set himself to remedy them. But, how could it be done?

To raise a sum sufficient to put up such buildings as were desirable, was, indeed, an herculian task. The mass of the church were then, more than now, indifferent to higher education; and it was questionable if the minority who were interested and had the means, could be induced to contribute it. A man without faith in God would not have thought of taking on himself such a task; but, actuated by that faith Dr. Leigh began to talk the matter of a college in private, and to preach about it in public. He met with many discouragements, (and who has not in any great and new enterprise?) but he triumphed over them all. Such was his success the Conference at its session in 1829 determined to build a college, and appointed a committee to select the site.

Several communities competed for the prize; but the college was located near Boydton, Va. One strong reason for locating it in Virginia was the hope of getting some aid from the State treasury; there being a law that as soon as the School Fund reached a certain point, the residue should be disbursed for the benefit of other schools in the commonwealth. That proved, however, it is said, to be only "a trick of political demagogues for securing offices." The college has never received any help from the State.

Disappointed in this expectation, the enterprise was threatened with disaster. Virginia and North Carolina, together, furnished only from one hundred to one hundred and fifty students, a part of whom came from South Carolina and Georgia. The income was not sufficient to meet expenses, and we hear the great-souled founder exclaiming: "Why do not our men of head and heart come to the rescue? Why do they not send in their offerings to the Lord, and whilst they live, rejoice in the good their liberality is effecting? Dying!—Why do they not remember this great interest of their beloved church? Has not Randolph-Macon another friend like Jesse Harper of Orange, in all our bounds? Oh! have we no Woffard among us who would be the benefactor of his race? Let him rear a monument to his memory which shall last as long as religion and learning shall be honored amongst a free and happy people."

He had borne the college on his heart; he had contributed to it liberally of his means. It was the child of his prayers and toils,

and he who had never failed in any other undertaking, could not see it struggling for life, and be indifferent to its cries. Its needs were his needs ; and all the fires of his great soul were kindled by its neglect, till they poured themselves out on the ears and into the heart of an unwilling church, and compelled her to nurse the starving infant into healthy life.

The gift of such a man is one of God's best boons to men. Oh, for one such in every Conference of Southern Methodism to-day ! One such, to shame the rest with the magnitude of his gifts from a scanty store, and scorch with fiery eloquence the consciences of those who hoard, till all the church needs to meet this demand shall be put at her disposal.

To Dr. Leigh more than any other, perhaps all others, is the church indebted for the existence of Randolph-Macon College, with the stream of beneficent influences it has been pouring into her churchly life since it was founded. It was the enterprise he cherished most of all, and one that shall perpetuate his memory as one of the wisest men with whose labors the church has been blest.

It is not claimed, however, that he was the sole instrument in the establishment of this, the first successful effort to found a distinctively Methodist college. The name of G. P. Disosway, deserves, as it will always have honorable mention in this connection, as an ardent friend and supporter of the scheme ; but Dr. Leigh was its first promoter, as he was its most influential, and life-long advocate. The College stands to-day a monument to his wisely directed zeal for the upbuilding of Christ's Kingdom in the world, and none better could be desired to perpetuate his memory. Its buildings may decay in the lapse of time, but others shall take their places ; and, when "storied urn" and bronze, or granite piles, in silence point to some forgotten hero of the world, her walls shall ring with the glad voices of those who seek in them not only the wisdom of this world, but that which cometh from above, and which makes its possessor doubly blest---the inheritor of this world, and that which is to come.

In 1868 the college was removed from near Boydton, to Ashland, Va., where, with new buildings and equipment, it has had a career of which its most exacting friends may be justly proud. The plant now includes the Woman's College, located at Lynchburg, Va., with an endowment of more than an hundred thousand dollars, besides the academies at Front Royal, and Bedford City, which cost an hundred thousand dollars each to erect them. These

schools, attended by five hundred students, are all the property of the church, and controlled by one Board of Trustees.

Great as are these results, the services of Dr. Leigh to the cause of higher education would be but imperfectly conceived, did we stop here. He was a member of the first Board of Trustees for Greensboro Female College, and by his labors made Trinity College an easier possibility. The tree which he planted is filling both States with its fruitage. The name given to the college wisely sought to bind to its interests the two States, the liberality of whose citizens had given it existence, and to which it must look for its principal patronage. Randolph was a name as illustrious in Virginia, as was that of Macon in North Carolina ; and, indeed, the two were of national repute. The blending of the two names in one gave each State an identity of interest in the institution, and a common pride in its successful career.

Dr. Leigh was a North Carolinian by birth, and a member of the North Carolina Conference by preference ; but he had fixed his residence near the college in Virginia, and was so fully identified with both the church in North Carolina, and the college in Virginia, that to him there was no divisional line in feeling or in fact.

The church in North Carolina was, by this means, brought to feel that the college was her property, in common with the church in Virginia ; and so fully was this sameness of interest felt, a large share of its patronage was obtained from this State, and a strong feeling of affection engendered for it, which remains with many among us to this day.

Let the college stand in the future, as it does now, and has stood in the past, for "Religion and Learning," as differentiated from culture divorced from religion, and North Carolinians must feel a genuine affection for it, because of their identification with its history—its having been founded by one of our noblest citizens, and bearing, in part, the name of one of her most illustrious statesmen.

The founding of the college being the great work of his life, it is by that he will be chiefly remembered ; but this great work was carried to success while he was doing full and exceptionally distinguished service in the pulpits, and at the altars of the church. Multitudes attended on his ministry, and to hear him preach was reckoned among the greater privileges of life. The larger part of his ministry was spent in the Presiding Eldership, and the Quarterly Meetings on his district were seasons of gracious visitations. It is said he never preached three sermons, consecutively, at a church without having a revival. Of course he did not preach at all times

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with equal effect, but his sermons were always carefully prepared, and left no feeling of disappointment with his hearers, except that which arises from comparative excellence.

They never compared him with others, but always with himself; and, sometimes, when he had finished, they were satisfied, but knew *he* could do better. Under one of his sermons, in Franklin county, it is said that sixty souls were converted at a single service—the service continuing through the day, and all of the following night.

I remember to have heard the late Luther Clegg, of Chatham county, tell delightfully of two sermons preached by Dr. Leigh, while Presiding Elder of the Raleigh District. One of these contained a description of the resurrection of Lazarus. The tomb, the crowd about it, the difference of feeling which actuated them; the weeping sisters, and their touching address, "Lord, if thou had been here, my brother had not died;" the agitation of the Saviour, himself in tears, was so graphically described that the congregation became oblivious to everything save the voice and thought of the preacher. Repeating the command of Christ, "Take ye away the stone," he then exclaimed in trumpet tones, "Lazarus, come forth!" The congregation was startled. The scene was as real to them as it was to the Jews of old. They looked to see the dead man come up before them, and when he added in gentler, but authoritative tone, "Loose him, and let him go," some involuntarily left their seats to unbind him. eddy

The other instance occurred in Johnston county. It was a Quarterly Meeting occasion, and Dr. Leigh had preached one of his masterly sermons. Among his auditors at that service was an infidel, attracted to the service by the fame of the preacher. As he left the church he made this comment on the sermon: "I have heard other men preach, and they have struck me sledge-hammer blows; but Dr. Leigh throws at a man *hammer-anvil-and-all!*"

The Rev. John E. Edwards, D. D., writing his personal recollections of Dr. Leigh, says, "I first saw Rev. H. G. Leigh at the Conference held in Norfolk, Va., February, 1836. His personal appearance impressed me favorably. He was then in the prime of his life. He was, I should say, five feet, ten inches in height, perhaps six feet. At that time he was not so fleshy as at a later period of life. His face was radiant, and of a very handsome cast and mould; his nose a striking feature; his eyes clear, calm, and full of expression; his head magnificent; his hair rich and lustrous, inclining to ringlets; his complexion ruddy and bright; his whole physique perfect; his voice unsurpassed in melody, intonation, and compass.

I heard him preach but once during the Conference session. His text was, "I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." His exegius of the text was delivered in a quiet, natural manner. The statement of his text was distinctly announced, the doctrine strikingly illustrated and enforced ; but it was not until he came to the application of his subject that he reached the highest power as an orator and public speaker.

In this department of his great sermon on that occasion, he made climax after climax of surpassing grandeur and sublimity. He had a peculiar shrug of the shoulder, and a peculiar breathing, approaching a suppressed cough, (I can't describe it) that always preceded these great and overwhelming outbursts of eloquence. In describing the man who "lived after the flesh," in opposition to the one "crucified with Christ," he had occasion to allude to the sensualist ; and, in speaking of a certain sin to which this character was addicted,, he raised his voice to its high trumpet tones, and in the most impassioned manner pealed out the sentence : "This is the sin that deals damnation round the land ; what I should call the very steamboat of hell !" The effect of his sermon was powerful and impressive.

He possessed an extraordinary magnetic power over his audience. I have seen vast multitudes, under his camp-meeting out door sermons, sitting and gaping—tears falling—lips quivering—apparently unconscious of anything around them ; and then, suddenly, by a striking gesture, and a corresponding utterance of the wonderful voice that never broke, I have seen a whole crowd swayed and moved like the forest before the storm.

On one occasion which comes up distinctly to my memory, at a camp-meeting, held at Soap Stone Church, in the Raleigh circuit, some twelve miles from the city of Raleigh, he was preaching to a very large congregation. The subject led him to describe the perilous condition of a sinner, unconscious of his danger. This he illustrated by one of his inimitable figures of speech. He represented a little child in pursuit of a butterfly. In its chase, around and around, it came to the brink of a deep well—for a moment it paused ; then it was in the act of extending its little hand to pluck a flower. It toppled. Just at that moment he sprang across the platform, and cried out in a most startling and plaintive voice, "My God, it's gone !" The whole congregation, by a common impulse, sprang to their feet, and many shrieked as

if they had seen the child actually disappear in its downward descent.

For nearly six years preceding his death he was without an appointment. The strong, well knit frame, of which a Grecian athlete might have been proud, was tortured by rheumatism ; but his zeal for the glory of his Master was unconquerable. He preached at the College and in the neighboring churches, as often as his health would permit and occasion offered. Once when the College Chaplain was absent, he had engaged Dr. Leigh to fill his pulpit for him on the following Sabbath. The Doctor prepared a sermon for the occasion, but, as he entered the pulpit a different text from that which he had selected impressed itself upon his mind, and the conviction that he should preach from that, instead of the other. What the one first selected was we do not know. The one from which he did preach was, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." One who was present says, "The sermon was one of remarkable power, and, at its close, he called for penitents. A large number of students, with streaming eyes, went to the altar of prayer ; and that service was the beginning of a revival which embraced nearly all the young men in the college."

We must not suppose from this incident that his sermons were not carefully prepared. Many of his discourses were not only thought out, but they were written in full. He had too high a sense of ministerial responsibility to go before a congregation without having made the very best preparation his circumstances would allow, and too much respect for the intelligence of those who came to hear him to think they could be entertained and benefitted by "airy declamations." His sermons in manuscript constitute about all of his literary remains ; yet his mind was of a high order, capable of grasping the most abstruse themes of science and theology.

It has been a matter of surprise, to which those who knew his fitness best, have not failed to give expression since his death, that he did not give the world a volume, or volumes on some of the great themes with which familiar, and for which he was so eminently qualified. But we really need not wonder at this. If he had any ambition for authorship he had no time to gratify the desire. His hands and heart were full of work on lines that Providence had chosen for him, and he wisely concentrated his energies on his pulpit work, and carrying to a successful issue the educational matters he had enterprized.

he was

Dr. L. C. Garland, late Chancellor of Vanderbilt University,

regarded him as one of the greatest minds of the age, and this opinion is echoed by Drs. W. A. Smith and J. E. Edwards, and, indeed, by all who knew him and were capable of judging.

Rev. W. A. Smith, D. D., said of him in a funeral discourse delivered at the time of his death, "The first time I saw Dr. Leigh was at the Portsmouth Conference, February, 1826. His movements in social life, his speeches and bearing in Conference session, and particularly his preaching, engaged my special attention. I soon determined in my own mind, that, in many respects, he was by far the most prominent member of the body. I have known him well since that period; served with him in important public positions; broken many a lance with him in debate; and have found to the present time no reason to change my opinion. Dr. Leigh had few equals in the pulpit. Sound in theology, bold in conception, often brilliant in fancy, and appealing in all his efforts, no less to the heart than to the head, he stood a prince among pulpit men."

Bishop John C. Granberry, says, "My personal knowledge of Rev. H. G. Leigh was slight, chiefly confined to the years of my student-life at Randolph-Macon College. I counted it a great privilege to hear him preach at a camp-meeting in 1848. He had then passed the meridian of his power; but that sermon sustained his fame as one of the foremost preachers of his day, and it was a day of great preachers. The text led him to dwell on the judgments of God against sinful men and nations which the Holy Scriptures record. His descriptions were graphic, vivid, terrific. He stirred and swayed the multitude. Dramatic genius was possessed by him in an eminent degree, without affectation, without seeking, almost without consciousness. The stories he told, and the scenes he depicted seemed present to the senses of the congregation, as they gave themselves up, eye, ear, and soul to the impassioned speaker. When I was a young man, I heard Dr. Landon C. Garland remark that of all the men he had met, he regarded Dr. Leigh as by nature the most highly gifted. I repeated this remark to Dr. Garland while he was Chancellor of Vanderbilt University; he had forgotten it, but said he would not take back the judgment which he had expressed so many years before."

Rev. C. F. Deems, D. D., who was himself a master of assemblies, says: "Dr. Leigh was great as an orator. I have heard Summerfield, Bascom, Maffitt, Breckinridge, Hawks, Bethune, Cookman, and Henry Clay and his compeers—and I have never heard a man who seemed to me to approach Hezekiah Gilbert Leigh as a *natural* orator. I never saw him *try* to produce an ef-

fect, but the magnetic power of his genius seemed naturally to shoot itself into his audience whenever he was fired with the themes of the Gospel. This power was wondrous, and wondrously unappreciated by its possessor."

If other testimony be needed to convince the most sceptical, I may point them to the commanding position to which he so early attained among his brethren of the Virginia Conference, and which he held in that, and, afterward, in the North Carolina Conference, to the close of his life. Within six years of his reception on trial, he was elected by his Conference a delegate to the General Conference—a very unusual occurrence—and was re-elected at each succeeding election. He was a member of the ever memorable General Conference of 1844, but sickness prevented his attending. He was also a member of the Convention, called under the "Plan of Separation," for the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He was elected to the General Conference, the most august body of the church, as soon as he was of eligible age, and this fact, and the one to which allusion has already been made, that he was re-elected as long as he lived, is proof beyond question of the high estimate put on his abilities, as well as of the affectionate regard of his brethren.

"But in the midst of a glorious career of usefulness, it pleased God by a most painful and prostrated affliction, to command him to comparative retirement." About ten years before his death he was attacked by a painful rheumatic affection, which soon became chronic, and, for the most part, disqualified him for any very active service as an itinerant preacher. At intervals his sufferings were very great. Eighteen months before his end he suffered a partial paralysis of his left side, and in July following, a paralysis of the kidneys, which it was thought at the time, would prove fatal in a few hours. He rallied, however, so far as to encourage the hope that he might recover his usual health; but on the 9th of September he was seized with a violent attack of dysentery, which so prostrated him that he sank into a *comatose* state, from which he never recovered, only as he was aroused for a few moments at a time, till he slept in death on the 18th of Sept., 1853.

His life and labors here have closed; but "he, being dead, yet speaketh." "His works do follow him," and a grateful church rises up to repeat the commendation which the Master long ago gave him: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Happy shall it be for us if the recollection of his life and labors shall stimulate us to fulfill in our measure the ministerial office with such fidelity that he and his co-laborers shall not be ashamed of us in the Kingdom, into which he, and they, have entered.

I shall close this address with some reflections on the sources of Dr. Leigh's great usefulness to the church in which his life was spent, and to the cause of Christ in general.

m Along these sources of usefulness I would specify the following :

1. *A sound body, and an active, well trained mind.*

The description of his bodily appearance by Dr. Edwards, given in the body of this address, though highly wrought, is but the sober truth. A medallion likeness of him, struck by Randolph-Macon College, and furnished me by Richard Irby, Esqr., Secretary and Treasurer of the College, (and which I have the honor to present to the Historical Society in his name) and a crayon portrait which I personally present, shows the head and bust of an Apollo. The Masters of Art could desire no better model after which to fashion a likeness of one of the gods. Revs. S. Lea, J. B. Martin, and I. W. Avent, each of whom knew him well, declare him to have been "the handsomest man they ever saw."

But, to this symmetry of form was added a vigorous constitution, which gave him great power of endurance, and enabled him to perform with comparative ease, tasks which would have been impossible to men less fortunate than he.

A strong mind in a weak body is not to be despised ; but a strong mind in a strong body, is one of nature's most priceless gifts. An oil lamp soon burns itself away, but the sun shines on forever.

To a mind not only bright, but strong, he added the embellishments to be obtained by cultivation, in the study of text books, and an acquaintance with what has come to be denominated for their worth—the "English Classics." This gave him not only the readiness of speech which never allowed him to falter for a word, but an elegance of diction which was a delight to all, and a never failing charm to the more cultured ones among his hearers. And, above all, his intellect had received the anointing of the Holy One ; and this gave him an insight into the truth of God which made his thoughts luminous, and gave to his sermons a directness and power not to be obtained by "the trickery of art." He wrote much, and, by this mental discipline, gave to his discourses a methodical arrangement, an accuracy of statement, and a beauty of expression, impossible to extemporary speech.

2. *He had a clear, and deep, religious experience.*

He was converted at an old-time camp-meeting. His experience was satisfactory after the songs, prayers, and shouts of the meeting had died away. The root of the matter was in him, and in the joy of a conscious possession of salvation, he longed to tell others

"The old, old story,
Of Jesus and his love."

His heart was full of it, and he never wearied in telling about it. Justification, Adoption, and the Witness of the Spirit, were themes on which he delighted to dwell, and were the solace of his hours of affliction. Dr. W. A. Smith, President of the College, was with him much during his last illness. He tells us, "The topics which interested him most, were the faith of assurance, inspired by the Holy Spirit ; the rich comfort it afforded him as he drew near the Jordan of death ; the bright and glowing light it threw over its otherwise dark valley ; the glory that awaited the children of God in the heavenly rest ; the curious and interesting inquiries which would be answered in the heavenly state ; the difficulties in both mental and moral nature, which would be solved ; and the glorious advance of mind along the illimitable fields of infinite knowledge, developing at every step of the vast progression, the amazing wonders of Deity, filling the ever increasing capacities of the immortal soul with that large measure of heavenly joy which the eternal fountain of light and love could alone supply."

At the period when it was supposed he was in a few hours of his dissolution, I spent some time with him. The conversation turning on his state and prospects, he dwelt with peculiar interest on the rich comfort afforded him by the great Bible truth of the Witness of the Spirit : and though he felt confident of a safe trust in Christ ; a sweet assurance of acceptance, there seemed to open to his view so bright and glowing a prospect of the truths yet to be revealed, in the fields of knowledge and comfort provided by the love of Christ, that he narrowed down, by comparison, the attainments already made, to a point so contemptible in his own eyes, as to cause him to loathe himself, and exclaim, "Oh, if there were not a days-man betwixt God and me, how could I stand his searching eye ! Thank God, bless God, for such a Saviour."

The day before his death, I visited him, and found him fast sinking. Just before leaving, as it was not deemed proper to fatigue him by conversation, I only sought to enquire : "Watchman what of the night?" He turned his fading eye upon me, and with a smile of triumph playing on his countenance, he softly said in reply to my inquiry, if he still felt that his trust was in his Saviour. "Oh yes ! What should I do without that ? Jesus is with me ! My trust is in him alone."

"Calm on the bosom of his God,"
He leaned his weary head ;
And passed beneath the chast'ning rod,
To where the Christ had led.

3. *Another, and the final source of his great usefulness, which I shall mention, was his consecration to his work.*

He was a man of one work, and seems never to have lost sight of the vow he, in common with all our ministers take, to "draw all their cares and studies this way." The words of St. Paul, "This one thing I do," might have been the motto of his life. He did not fritter away his life in indolence, nor dissipate his energies on that which had no immediate connection with his labors as a servant of the church. His ministerial life, for the most part, was spent in District work. At that time the Districts were geographically much larger than now, and, as there were but few rail-roads they were more laborious to travel. The exposure necessary, under such conditions, was doubtless the main cause of the rheumatic affection, to which after a struggle of ten years, other complications having risen in the time, he succumbed in death, at an age when he should have been but little beyond the prime of life.

He died in his 58th year, eaten up by his zeal for God's house, and the glory of His name.

The sword never rusted in his hands. He kept it sharp and bright by constant use, and when it was wrested from his grasp by Death, "it was warm with recent fight." It has been forty-three years since he left us to be "present with the Lord," and near a half century since his voice, and the sounds of his battle-axe, were heard on the fields of conflict with "the powers of darkness;" but the influence of his life and labors still lives as an inspiration to his successors in the ministry, and an ever increasing blessing to the Church.

"The memory of the just is blessed," and, though his works shall give him immortality, ungrateful shall we be, if we fail to keep his memory fresh in the minds of men. To this purpose I consecrate this effort, in behalf of the Historical Society, and myself, to whom its preparation has indeed been a labor of love.

The memory of such a life can not perish; but it were a crime in us to contribute to its neglect!

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